

REMARKS

The above amendment and these remarks are responsive to the Office Action of Examiner James A. Kramer, dated 21 Jun 2005.

Claims 1-7 and 9-17 are in the case, none as yet allowed.

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected o the phrase "look and feel" in claims 3 and 13.

"Look and feel" is a widely-used expression in the industry when developing software. It is to reflect that, when a user screen is developed, it represents in a similar fashion what it is replacing (whether it be another application or a paper process). In no way is it supposed to imply touching or feeling.

However, applicants have amended claims 3 and 13 to remove the word 'feel', leaving 'look', which has the

END920000175US1

14

S/N 09/815,313

meaning of 'appearance', as will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art.

Applicants request that the objection to claims 3 and 13, as currently amended, be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1-17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Maners in view of Virgin et al., and further in view of Cukor et al. Apparently, this rejection refers to US Patents 6,507,826 B1, 6,826,542 B1, and 5,168,444, respectively, hereinafter Maners, Virgin, and Cukor, respectively.

Claim 8 had been previously canceled, so this rejection is interpreted to be with respect to claims 1-7 and 9-17.

As the Examiner observes, neither Maners or Virgin contain references to invoice imaging, which is a key requirement; that is, to be able to see a copy of a paper invoice verses one that is electronically generated. While Cukor discusses invoice imaging, it is the bringing together of these two capabilities in a manner which supports, determines, and manages both negative and positive confirmation processing by an individual employee who is

END920000175US1

15

S/N 09/815,313

both the originator of an invoice for and the end user of a purchased commodity or service.

The several steps of claims 1-7 (as previously presented) setting forth that process, and the references cited by the Examiner in rejecting them, is set forth below.

Maners 5:44-46 receiving an invoice (that is,
 requisition) from an employee

Applicants note that none of the references specify that an employee who is the end user of a commodity or service is the one who originates the requisition and confirms the vendor invoice.

Maners 5:44-46 preparing a purchase order
Maners submitting purchase order as EDI or
 paper

Applicants note that Maners only teaches EDI processing, and not paper.

Maners receiving EDI invoice directly to
 accounts payable (A/P) personnel
Cukor 6:33-36 receiving paper invoice to A/P personnel
Cukor 6:33-36 preparing image of invoice for goods or
 services

END920000175US1

16

S/N 09/815,313

Cukor 8:5-30 keying stored images in image file to
invoice data

Virgin 10:32-53, communicating electronic mail to
2:46-49, 13:25-30, employee, linking to invoice image
and 11:16-26 specifying invoice subject to one of
negative and positive confirmation
processing

Applicants note, as the Examiner observes, that Virgin
only teaches positive confirmation processing. The
Examiner cites no reference re negative processing.

No citation specifying to end user that invoice is
to be subject to either negative or
positive confirmation processing

Virgin 13:1-9 providing search interface at end user
workstation for linking to images of
invoices that match criteria
Virgin displaying invoice image to end-user
confirmation/approval by negative or
positive processing

Applicants note that there is no mention in any of the
references to negative processing.

Applicants have previously amended all claims to

END920000175US1

17

S/N 09/815,313

clarify that it is the individual that originally submitted a requisition, or created the original order, that must approve the resulting invoice, and by this amendment clarifies that that individual is the end-user (as distinguished from purchasing or accounting personnel).

Applicants invention relates to a method and system for invoice authorization by the original requester (that is, individual employee) with invoices presented to the requester in a particularly useful and user friendly manner whether such invoices are received hard copy or by EDI. These concepts are explained in applicants' specification, for example, at page 16, line 20 to page 19, line 10.

Maners U.S. Patent 6,507,826 B1 relates to EDI processing, which is automation between computer systems and refers to interactions between a vendor and an invoice processing system. This allows the vendor to enter the invoice, and have it processed by the system. Maners describes an "agent" that authorizes payment of invoices, but nowhere teaches how to manage images, nor that the "agent" must be the individual employee submitting the original requisition for goods and services to be consumed or use (end-use) by that individual employee. Maners does not teach enabling users (in a corporation) to review those invoices. Applicants invention relates to the process of enabling individuals who ordered the original goods or

END920000175US1

18

S/N 09/815,313

services for their own use to ensure that payment is made, or not made, based on their being able to view the original invoice images, and supports both EDI and manual processing.

Applicants have amended these claims to clarify that their system and method provides for having the individual who created the original order make the determination that the resulting invoice from the vendor should be paid (or not). In applicants' invention, unlike Maners "agent", there is no centralization of payment authorization.

Cukor describes the management and processing of shipping transactions via image processing. Cukor relates to capturing images rather than dealing with the hard-copy paper associated with shipping. Applicants' claims, on the other hand, do not relate to shipping. They had been further amended to focus on enabling the end user who ordered goods for his own consumption to ensure that proper payment is processed for those goods by viewing invoices electronically.

The workflow of Cukor does not address any associated business workflow, such as payment or reconciliation of goods received. It does offer a detailed breakdown of how imaging systems can reduce the large amount of paper (and error) usually associated with such processing. However, it

END920000175US1

19

S/N 09/815,313

like Maners, does not describe any end-user decision points for paying for goods received, particularly on the claimed point that such decision is made by the original end-user individual employee requester in accordance with the process set forth in the claims.

Virgin is newly cited for teaching "approval rules logic that requires the approval of the individual that created the original order." Applicants traverse on this critical point. Virgin refers to authorized approvers, but never specifies that such are the individuals entering the original invoice (ie, requisition) and that such individuals are the end users of the commodity or service requisitioned and invoiced.

Applicants whole process is structured to enable end-users who request a service or commodity to provide confirmation according to a specified approval process: either positive or negative confirmation. To enable end users to function in such a capacity, not being A/P or purchasing personnel and trained in the use of electronic or paper work flow executed by such personnel, applicants have provided a specific work flow that is designed for their use, and includes the steps set forth above with respect to claim 1.

The Examiner asserts that that workflow is taught by

END920000175US1

20

S/N 09/815,313

the combination of Cukor, Maners, and Virgin. On this point, applicants traverse, arguing that in making this combination the Examiner is, in effect, using applicants own specification as a road map to collect teachings from several references. Further, nowhere in that combination is there a teaching that both negative and positive confirmation processes are implemented by an end user who receives a commodity or service for which he/she is the original requester. The details of the claim set forth a workflow that is uniquely configured to the needs of such an individual for viewing original invoices, receiving e-mail instructions to execute a positive or negative confirmation process, and so forth.

Applicants have amended the claims to set forth additional details with respect to positive and negative confirmation processes.

Applicants request that the rejection of claims 1-7 and 9-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants urge that the above amendments be entered and the case passed to issue with claims 1-7, and 9-17.

END920000175US1

21

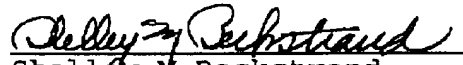
S/N 09/815,313

The Application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action by the Examiner is urged. Should differences remain, however, which do not place one/more of the remaining claims in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to phone the undersigned at the number provided below for the purpose of providing constructive assistance and suggestions in accordance with M.P.E.P. Sections 707.02(j) and 707.03 in order that allowable claims can be presented, thereby placing the Application in condition for allowance without further proceedings being necessary.

Sincerely,

T. A. Aber, et al.

By


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END920000175US1

22

S/N 09/815,313